



# Statements and Speeches

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## NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE A BEDROCK OF SECURITY

An Address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, in his Capacity as Honorary President of the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Session, Brussels, December 10, 1981

...We are meeting today at a critical period in the history of the [North Atlantic] Alliance. The maintenance of an effective deterrent has never been more important — yet, significant segments of our publics, particularly young people, have become confused about the necessity for defence and disillusioned with the concept of deterrence. Worse, many of them simply do not believe that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is treading the path of peace. Some even believe that a nuclear war would somehow become more likely if the Theatre Nuclear Force (TNF) modernization decision is implemented.

We hear within our countries loud voices in denunciation of NATO's nuclear defences. We see street demonstrations directed against the TNF modernization component of our December 1979 decision. There are demands that NATO should forego its modernization plans regardless of whether the Soviet Union accepts corresponding reductions in its nuclear forces. At the same time there is all too little awareness of the arms-control negotiations component of the same decision, or of the awesome nuclear weapons of the East.

It is all too easy to discount this body of opinion as a vocal and bothersome minority. These concerns and apprehensions may be limited to a vocal minority but they are nonetheless serious. The existence of such concerns suggests to me that we in NATO must face up to the fact that there is a need for us all to do a better job of communicating with the public. We should make a more determined effort to inform those who have become disoriented in the stress of the nuclear era and who need to be reminded of the essential role our Alliance plays in safeguarding our societies from intimidation. We need to speak also to those for whom the North Atlantic Alliance is an institution created long ago, for purposes and reasons which are for them ancient history.

In speaking to our own peoples, including our youth, we need to remind ourselves of our origins, to reaffirm our faith in what we stand for and to recognize with clarity the challenge we face.

We can be proud of our achievements. For more than 30 years, this Alliance has been successful in doing the job it was created for: it has preserved the peace in Europe and has deterred Soviet expansion in the NATO area. It has, in fact, given Europe the longest period of peace it has known in this century. It has also proved its worth as a highly developed forum for political consultations and crisis management. Beyond that, it has fostered growing co-operation in a variety of defence-related fields on the basis of shared interests and values.

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Need to communicate

We, in this Alliance, have been able to preserve peace until now because we have maintained a credible deterrent capability and the transatlantic bridge on which the essential solidarity of this Alliance rests. These ingredients of success in the past will continue to be the keys to the success of our enterprise in the future.

All this is cause for justified satisfaction but not for complacency at a time when segments of the public have lost sight of the Alliance's role. It is not enough to recall the past. Today, we must get across the message that we in this Alliance stand for peace. We must get across the message that the purpose of our weapons, nuclear and conventional, is to prevent a war, whether it arises by miscalculation or design, not to fight one.

The East-West situation has been perceived by many as more or less stable over the past decade. For a while, we seemed to be building bridges with the East. We lived in the decade of *détente* — the superpowers were talking to each other about limiting strategic arms, and negotiations began on the mutual and balanced reduction of conventional forces.

However, during this same period, the Soviet Union has been quietly but resolutely building up its nuclear and conventional forces. It has shown by its invasion and continued occupation of Afghanistan that it is prepared to resort to military force in pursuit of what it considers to be its national interests. Unfortunately, the serious implications of these developments were not perceived among large segments of our people. To them, *détente* gave the promise of reversing the nuclear arms race. Now they mistakenly imagine that it is our modernization decision which threatens *détente*, rather than Soviet missiles, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and Soviet pressure on Poland. In truth, the peace movement is more a product of fear than of logic.

**Disarmament a  
matter of  
bargaining**

We must do a better job of addressing these fears. We must convince our publics that unilateral disarmament increases rather than reduces the risk of war. We agree with the peace movement that the nuclear arms race can and must be arrested. They should be assured that we are not trying to match the other side one for one and that we are not seeking military superiority but greater security at the lowest possible level of armaments, nuclear and non-nuclear. We should do all we can in our communiqués and with the communication resources of the Alliance to show that this is an essential purpose for us. The fears of the peace movement need to be addressed, but the real campaign for nuclear disarmament has to be waged at the bargaining table.

All of us warmly welcomed President Reagan's statement on November 18. Canadians were impressed by the comprehensive approach taken by the President on the broad range of arms-control issues, including his announcement that the United States was prepared to resume negotiations on strategic weapons early in the new year. They also welcomed the opening of negotiations in Geneva last week. The President's statement went a long way towards removing the unease and anxiety about the Alliance's commitment to arms control.

As leaders of the Alliance, we all need to exercise great care lest there be misunder-

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standing of our fundamental desire to avoid war. Our peoples need reassurance that for us, all war is anathema — not just nuclear war, but all war.

Of course we must bargain from strength. There must be no backing down from our resolve to counter the Soviet threat. We have, however, now shown more clearly to all who desire peace our alternative to unilateral disarmament.

All of us attach the greatest importance to the Geneva negotiations. The United States has entered these negotiations with the heavy responsibility of representing the interest of its partners. All of us have been impressed by the intensity of the consultations in the Special Consultative Group in preparation for these negotiations. They are a clear reflection of the United States' commitment to Allied interests as well as the common desire to achieve effective agreements.

**NATO approach  
must be constant**

We need now to maintain a sense of momentum in arms control as an integral part of efforts to improve NATO security. We must be constant in our approach, not only in our public utterances but also in our willingness to negotiate in all areas — TNF, strategic arms reductions, and mutual and balanced force reductions. Above all, we must maintain our solidarity. Without it, the Soviet Union would not have been brought to the negotiating table, and success there will not be possible unless Alliance solidarity is maintained in complete support of the 1979 two-track decision.

One lesson that emerges from the most recent events is that, beyond the already enormous technical problems to be overcome in the arms-control negotiations, the most important element for their success is to establish a sufficient degree of shared interest based on mutual confidence. It will take both sides to establish the basis but we must be sure to do everything in our power to bridge that gap rather than to widen it. In this context, I hope that a meeting between President Reagan and President Brezhnev, which has been approved in principle by both sides, will take place as soon as there are prospects for success and the necessary preparations can be completed.

We can also do more to demonstrate that ours is not just a military alliance — that it is a community of like-minded peoples defending commonly held principles, pursuing common objectives and promoting the widest possible co-operation in the interests of greater stability and welfare. In this context, may I add that it is a matter of gratification to me, as I am sure it is for all of us, to be able to anticipate the enlargement of this community by the admission of Spain to our Alliance.

**Other develop-  
ments**

I should like now to refer very briefly to some of the other important developments.

In the past year, we have re-invigorated our political consultations at ministerial level, and I trust we will continue this successful experiment. We have also developed a new technique of contingency planning within NATO which has proven very effective.

I should note also that we have taken a significant step in recognizing explicitly, as we did at our last ministerial meeting in Rome, that developments in other parts of the world outside the NATO area may also have important implications for our

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security. The instability and upheaval in the Third World offer temptations for outside interference which must also be destabilizing in a world in which security is indivisible. It is imperative, therefore, that we continue to insist on respect for the principle of non-interference: to recognize the non-aligned status of states; and to contribute to improvement of economic and social conditions in the Third World.

Solidarity, even among like-minded peoples, cannot be taken for granted; it must be constantly renewed in recognition of the fact that people living in different places are bound to have differing perceptions and differing styles. Our common task — and one to which Canada attaches particular importance — is not to pretend these differences do not exist but to go about bridging them. This task becomes the more important in current circumstances of international tension, when the security, stability and integrity of each one of us depends as never before on the solidarity and co-operation of all.

Until the still far-off time when a general system of collective security through the United Nations can be successfully established, a goal which continues to elude the world, the North Atlantic Alliance will remain the bedrock of security for all of us. We must, therefore, renew our determination to work together with common purpose to achieve peace for ourselves and for the world.